For Immediate Release
December 8, 2009

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CHECKBOOK.org Shows Consumers How to Secure Incredible Deals at Top-Notch Hotels, Just in Time for Holiday Travel

Simple Bidding Techniques Find Best Bargains on Auction Site

Whether consumers are looking for affordable alternatives to bunking with relatives or planning a holiday-week getaway, **CHECKBOOK.org** has demonstrated a strategy for using Priceline.com's "Name Your Own Price" bidding system to get rock-bottom prices at four- and five-star hotels. For example, **CHECKBOOK.org** shoppers, using their special strategy for bidding on Priceline.com, were recently able to book:

- A $67 per-night room at the Edgewater Hotel in Seattle, a four-star hotel that for the same requested dates was booking the same type of room for $216 per night at popular websites like Expedia and Travelocity, and on the hotel's own website.
- A $58 per-night room at the four-star Hyatt Regency in Chicago's Loop, which for the same requested dates was booking the same type of room for $189 per night on other websites.
- A $72 per night room at the four-star Loews Hotel in City Center Philadelphia, which for the same nights was booking the same type of room for $199 per night on other websites.

And these low rates weren't flukes: When pricing hotel rooms in several major U.S. cities for several different time periods, **CHECKBOOK.org**'s shoppers were able to secure steeply discounted rates from Priceline just about every time they tried, whether shopping for rooms the day before or weeks before the trip.

The key steps for consumers in **CHECKBOOK.org**'s strategy, using Priceline.com's "Name Your Own Price" feature are:

- Do a little research to get a feel for the available hotels in the desired region;
- On the Priceline.com website, select a first-choice neighborhood for the reservation;
- Select a four- or five-star hotel category to ensure quality;
- Start bids low, usually in the $50 or $60 range; and
- Increase the bid if the initial bid or bids are not taken.

The problem with this approach for those who don't know all the tricks is that, if a bid is not accepted, Priceline makes users wait 24 hours before they can bid again at a higher price.

That's where **CHECKBOOK.org**'s special strategy comes in. Priceline will let users make another bid immediately if they change something about the bid. So, consumers can add a neighborhood and let Priceline find a four-star hotel in either their first-choice neighborhood or another neighborhood. Is it risky asking Priceline to find a hotel in the second neighborhood if it isn't where the bidder wants to stay? No, as long as he or she is sure that the second requested neighborhood *doesn't have* any four-star hotels. That information can be found on the Priceline website. If a bidder's second bid is not accepted, he or she should add another neighborhood that doesn't have any four-star hotels and bid again for a four-star hotel at a slightly higher price -- until a bid is accepted.

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Consumers should be aware that booking through Priceline does have some disadvantages, such as not being able to choose a specific hotel, just a neighborhood and a number of stars. Also, prepaying for a room in full reduces leverage with the hotel if there's a problem with the service or accommodations. And just because a discount rate is available at a four- or five-star hotel doesn't mean all the hotel's services, such as parking (which costs $48 a night at the Hyatt Regency Chicago, for example), will come cheap.

For a limited time, CHECKBOOK.org is providing consumers free access to its entire article on hotel price bidding at checkbook.org/cheaphotels.

CHECKBOOK.org*'s editors are available for interviews. To make arrangements, call Jamie Lettis at 202-454-3006.*

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